



200 W. Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools

# HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

Fact Sheet  
**69**

April 2004

---

## ***What are Head Start and Early Head Start programs?***

Head Start and Early Head Start are federally funded, comprehensive child development programs for low-income families with children from birth to age five, pregnant women, and children with disabilities. Families with incomes at or below the federal poverty level are eligible for services. Head Start serves families with children three to five years old, and Early Head Start serves families with children birth to three years old.

---

## ***What is the purpose of Head Start?***

Head Start is designed to help children develop their social and cognitive skills and to prepare them to enter school by providing health, educational, nutritional, social, and other services. Early childhood education, health services, parent education, nutrition, and family partnership agreements are integral components of Head Start and Early Head Start.

---

## ***How many people are receiving services?***

Nearly 12,900 children and 200 pregnant women are receiving services through 280 program sites located throughout Maryland. More than 10 percent of those enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start programs are children with disabilities.

---

## ***What are the benefits of Head Start and Early Head Start?***

Longitudinal studies and evaluations indicate that children demonstrate improved skills in vocabulary, writing, and social competence after they complete Head Start programs. Children who participate in Early Head Start programs demonstrate improvement in cognitive and language development.

---

## ***How is funding provided?***

Approximately \$78 million in federal funding is provided to grantees for direct services to children and their families and for quality improvements to programs. State supplemental funding for Head Start and Early Head Start provides \$3 million for program expansion and quality improvements. The programs are directly funded and monitored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

---

## ***Where can I get more information?***

Information about Early Childhood Initiatives: Head Start and Early Head Start can be found on the Web at [www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/readiness](http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/readiness).